

Breastfeeding Action Plan

Purpose Statement:

According to the Center for Disease Control 2018 Breastfeeding Report Card, 81.5% of Iowa mothers initiated breastfeeding and 51.4% continued breastfeeding until the recommended 6 months in 2015. Data from the Iowa Newborn Metabolic Report show that in 2019, 82.6% of all mothers initiated breastfeeding in Iowa, meeting and exceeding the Healthy People 2020 breastfeeding initiation goal of 81.9%. The most recent Iowa WIC Program data through January 2020 show that rates for initiation of breastfeeding have increased to 72% and rates have remained stable for breastfeeding until 6 months at 22%.

Mothers and infants participating in the WIC Program are often aware that breastfeeding is the best choice, but face barriers beyond those of the general population, including lack of support from family and friends, a need to return to work sooner, and lower confidence in their ability to breastfeed. The Iowa WIC Program strives to help breastfeeding families succeed by offering anticipatory guidance and education prior to birth, breastfeeding support by nurses, dietitians, breastfeeding peer counselors and other professionals with extended breastfeeding education after birth, and providing tools such as breast pumps and other breastfeeding supplies to ensure women can breastfeed longer and meeting their breastfeeding goals.

Objective 1:

By September 30, 2021, increase the proportion of Iowa WIC participants who initiated breastfeeding from 72% to 73% and increase the number of Iowa WIC participants who continue breastfeeding for the recommended 6 months from 22% to 23%.

Lead Staff:

Nicole Newman

Objective 2:

By September 30, 2021, enhance services provided to WIC participants receiving peer support through the Iowa WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling program by increasing educational, networking, and partnership opportunities for peer programs.

Lead Staff:

Jane Stockton

Data System Action Plan

Objective:

Consider the possibility of providing a state wide solution for WIC participant appointment reminders integrated with the Focus MIS.

Purpose Statement:

While a few local agencies have implemented appointment reminders for WIC participant appointments, the majority do not have a solution. Over the past two years, local agency partners have asked the state office to explore options. A statewide solution would provide a standardized approach to benefit all Iowa WIC participants.

Lead Staff:

Brandy Benedict, WIC Operations Director,
Jenni Rowley, DBA,
Connie Glover, Applications Support,
Charles Lorinser, RD, LD

Nutrition and Health Services Action Plan:

Increase local agency WIC staff's knowledge of Policy, System, and Environmental (PSE) changes so they can begin incorporating PSE activities into their grant action plans.

Objective:

By September 30, 2021 the Iowa WIC program will have begun introducing PSE activities/training with local WIC agencies on incorporating policy, system, and environmental change (PSE) approaches into the work they are doing.

Purpose Statement:

WIC has proven to be an effective nutrition program that focuses on helping each individual participant achieve a positive health outcome through behavior change. However, healthy eating and active living initiatives that focus on behavior change and broader system changes realize greater impact through multidimensional programming. Individuals have a harder time initiating and maintaining healthy behavior changes, despite their motivation, if the environment in which they live doesn't support those behaviors. We have to make the healthy choice the easy choice to achieve the goals of our program.

Lead Staff:

Nikki Davenport RDN, LD

Outreach Action Plan

Objective:

By July 1, 2021, a WIC outreach plan aimed increasing collaboration between programs that service similar populations as the WIC program. WIC understands that the families that participate in our programs face many barriers due to their socioeconomic status. By building state partnerships to promote collaboration between different programs that service the same populations we can decrease barriers that are present to individuals to allow them to get to services and programs we hope increase their overall health while increasing participation numbers.

Purpose Statement:

WIC participant levels have been steadily decreasing over the last decade. WIC is a supplemental nutrition program for infants, children under the age of 5, pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and women who have had a baby in the last 6 months. Our current outreach for the current RFA is to close the Gap between our enrollment numbers (participants that are certified within the Focus system) and participation (participants that have benefits and are actively coming to appointments).

WIC's mission is to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children who are at nutritional risk. Part of that mission is accomplished by providing referrals to other programs and health care. The participants of the WIC program are of a socioeconomic state that puts them at higher risk to be food insecure and experience lower health outcomes. Additionally it is proven that there are many health disparities to individuals of ethnic and racial minority groups that put them in higher risk categories. This is reflected in the participants WIC provides services to which in 2019 was 52.8% White, 14% Black or African American, 21.4% Hispanic and the remainder being of other or multiple racial and ethnic groups where Iowa's overall population is 90.7% White.

Due to the importance to promote health equity and food security to work towards positive health outcomes of Iowa families, Iowa WIC plans to work towards decreasing the barriers that are present to these families to get them the services and resources that are present not only in their communities but within the state to promote health equity across all racial and ethnic groups to protect and improve the health of all Iowans. To accomplish this we will reach out to and open communication channels with new and current programs and organizations to foster networks and coalitions across the state that service the same populace as WIC.

Lead Staff:

Caryn Wittry, RD, LD, CLC Charles Lorinser, RD, LD

Vendor Action Plan

Objective:

Review current foods list and compile feedback from WIC participants inquiring for additional food offerings.

Purpose Statement:

To increase participant's choices and access to more nutritious WIC foods in WIC grocery stores across the state.

Lead Staff:

Kenny Kane